

Prayer Meeting

Week Beginning August 29.

CITY MISSIONS:

Every great city and many small towns have their slum problems. In America the chief slum problem consists of effectively dealing with the immigrant masses. In North America there are 37,000,000 people of foreign birth or foreign parentage. These multitudes must necessarily have their effect on the moral and religious life of the whole people. In many parts of our land, especially in the West, where large foreign elements have become established, injurious moral conditions are seen in the prevalent Sabbath desecration and intemperance, to say nothing of the widespread materialism which the inferior foreign element has induced. There is a superior element who are the friends and helpers of every righteous cause.

In a recent report at Omaha of a commission appointed by the Y. M. C. A. to investigate conditions and methods in dealing with the foreign elements in our land, the commission showed that of the 100,000,000 people of North America, 40 per cent on the United States side of the line are foreign or of foreign-born parentage, and largely of European descent, and in Canada 80 per cent of the immigrants are of Anglo-Saxon origin. In the United States one-third of the male population from the age of 12 to 34 years are of foreign-born parentage.

Of the immigrants who come to the United States the largest proportion are from Southeastern Europe, where nearly 50 per cent of these people are illiterate; they are from agricultural communities, their standards of living are the lowest and poorest; 82 per cent are of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox faith and 13 per cent are Jews.

In thirty cities in thirteen States of the United States 55 to 85 per cent are of foreign parentage. The factories rather than the farms attract them. More than 90 per cent of this whole population are either totally illiterate or have but the barest rudiments of education.

The Gospel is the one remedy for the disorders and dangers which are engendered by these extraordinary conditions, considerations of self interest, the protection of our hoe life and the security of every personal interest require that we give the Gospel, which is "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," to these, our fellow-citizens.

Says a writer in the Home Mission Herald: "While politicians are clamorous about surface questions, about mere matters of policy, the home missionary is dealing at first hand with the most fundamental things which affect the national welfare and life. The tariff is a small matter compared with the question of the Americanization of the hordes of foreigners who are already in control in many parts of the country. The question of the character of a civilization transcends in importance all questions of method, policy and material interest. In its dealing with these questions the Home Missionary Society is doing the work of statesmanship as well as of religion, and its servants are public men in a truer and deeper sense than the great majority of those who fill our legislative bodies or sit in the places of executive power. Such a recognition doubtless awaits the men who are now putting heart and life into the service of Home Missions."

In addition to work among foreigners in our cities there is an immense population of natives and the children of natives who are totally aloof from Christian institutions and influence. The responsibility of our city churches in this particular is solemn and tremendous. There are churches of five hundred to one thousand members, sustained at great expense, which are doing nothing for the neglected masses, practically at their doors. All this means opportunity and a call to duty. The Christian denominations should unite in concerted and earnest effort to provide permanently for the spiritual needs of the drifted masses. Their souls are infinitely precious, and they and their children may become useful and noble members of society in response to the teaching, the sympathy, the example and prayers of God's people.

Young People's Societies

LIFE LESSONS FROM ROMANS.

Topic for Sunday, September 5: Life Lessons for me from the Book of Romans. Romans 12:1-21.

DAILY READINGS.

Monday: What sin does for man. Romans 1:18-32.
Tuesday: Justification by grace. Romans 5:1-11.
Wednesday: Yielding to God. Romans 6:12-23.
Thursday: The burden of the flesh. Romans 7:14-25.
Friday: Freedom by the Spirit. Romans 8:1-17.
Saturday: Fulness of redemption. Romans 8:18-30.

Like most of the epistles, this one has its doctrinal and its practical sides. The doctrines project themselves into duties, and the duties grow out of the doctrines.

There is no high life apart from great principles. Those who decry doctrine know not whereof they speak. A proper knowledge of the truth in its intrinsic nature and relations is essential to a strong life.

In the Epistle to the Romans one will find the richest body of doctrine to be found anywhere in the work of God. Special reasons led Paul in writing literally to lay himself out in this masterpiece of his mind and heart and pen.

He had been hindered in his effort to get to Rome. He greatly desired to go there. His failure to go was attributed by some to fear on his part to subject the gospel to the fierce light of the great Roman capital. He sends this letter in lieu of himself for the present.

"I am ready," says he, "to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." These words contain the theme of the book: "The Gospel the Power of God."

Paul's adaptation of his theme to the people whom he was addressing is highly suggestive. It was wise and strong. Power was more to a Roman than anything else. The Greeks loved wisdom; the Romans gloried in power. In setting forth the gospel as the power of God he at once attracted attention to it.

Starting from this theme, he shows how all men are in sin, and how, by the deeds of the law, none are justified. He thus reasons out the need for a Saviour. Then he shows how faith in Christ, the eternal Son of God, brings justification. He then illustrates this by the history of Abraham. Then he shows the glorious effects of it. Then he applies it to the practical life.

Thrust in, between the more distinctively doctrinal and practical parts, is a short treatise, embraced in the ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters, on the relation of the great doctrine of justification by faith first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles, then to the two in their mutual relations. Here comes in his splendid treatise on predestination and his stirring appeal to Christians to give the gospel to the Jews.

The eighth chapter is perhaps the richest chapter in the Bible, outside of that one recording Christ's talk with Nicodemus. It is on the Christian's assurance of eternal life. The believer is sure because he has been freed from the law of sin and death, because he is a new creature in Christ Jesus, because the Spirit of God dwells in him, because he is adopted into God's family, because he has the testimony of the Spirit, because even suffering is made to contribute to his good, because of the eternal purpose of God and electing grace, and because the love of God in Christ is inseparable and eternal.

Yet this one thing I learn to know,
Each day more surely as I go,
That doors are opened, ways are made,
Burdens are lifted or are laid,
By some great law unseen and still,
"Not as I will."

—Helen Hunt Jackson.